



Zostera muelleri subsp. novazelandica

Common Name(s):

seagrass, eelgrass, nana, *Zostera*

Current Threat Status (2012):

At Risk - Declining

Distribution:

Indigenous. North, South and Stewart Islands. Throughout southern and eastern Australia

Habitat:

Marine. Mostly submerged in estuaries where it is found on intertidal and subtidal flats of sandy mud. Often in channels or deep pools of water

Features*:

Grass-like plants of mud or sandy-silt shallow marine environments. Rhizomes compressed 1-2 mm diameter, widely creeping, rooting at nodes; internodes 10-20 mm long. Leaf-sheath 20-40 mm long, becoming fibrous with age, the broad membranous margins inflexed and each terminating in an erect rounded auricle; lamina 50-300 x 1-2 mm; primary nerves 3, interstitial nerves 4-6, cross veins usually at more or less regular, long intervals and mostly all extending from the median to marginal nerve, producing a pattern of distinctive long oblongs. Erect stems narrow, flattened, the subfloral peduncular internode 10-60 x 0.6-1.0 mm. Spathe-like sheath 15-25 x 2.0-2.5 mm (folded width), its margins squarely truncate at the apex and its terminating lamina 30-80 x 1.5-2.0 mm. Spadix often shorter than spathe; retinacula usually 3 on each side, broadly obliquely ovate 1.0-1.5 x 1.0 mm and 2.0-2.5 mm apart. Stamens and carpels closely packed, carpels rarely > 6 and anthers about twice their number, all sloping obliquely inwards and upwards. Achene elliptic-oblong, 2.5 x 1.0 mm; seed smooth, yellow.

Flowering:

October - February

Fruiting:

January - February

Threats:

Not Threatened. However, due to widespread siltation and increasingly poor water quality eelgrass communities are declining throughout their range.

*Attribution:

Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1997).

References and further reading:

Moore, L.B.; Edgar, E. 1970: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I. Government Printer, Wellington.

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=2335



Photographer: Rebecca Stanley



Caption: Whangapoua Harbour. January

Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth